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# The Use of Pseudonym in Social Media

*by Muslimin M*

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## The Use of Pseudonym in Social Media

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**Abstract.** Major changes in the field of communication have occurred since the invention of the internet, which is the world's computer network that originally developed the ARPANET as a communication system related to defence and security. Furthermore, the network system is used freely by users to communicate with each other called social media. Through social media, users can publish their daily activities through the story feature. In these social media accounts, people are not required to use real names. That makes people free to use any name as a user name, even pseudonyms that are not related to their real names are allowed, but when people use pseudonyms, their real identities tend to be abstract. This is what is often misused by certain people. In general, this study aims to analyze the reasons people use pseudonyms and how the responsibilities of pseudonym users are on social media. This research approach is qualitative with a descriptive format—data obtained by conducting interviews and observations. Data analysis uses an interactive model from Miles and Huberman, while the data validity test uses source triangulation. The outputs and targets of this study are in the form of Publication in Proceedings/ International Journals after being disseminated in an international forum, so that the wider community can obtain information related to the study material.

**Keywords:** *pseudonym, social media*

### INTRODUCTION

Utilization of the internet as an information and communication technology that has high essence and has implications becomes a primary need for humans because the internet is able to create new spaces for one person to be connected to others in cyberspace. The internet, besides giving positive benefits such as speeding up human work, also brings a negative impact which is the blurring of one's privacy boundaries. As described by Walter B. Wriston (Ibrahim, 2011: 127), in *The Twilight of Sovereignty*, the current condition is an era where everyone can have access to everything. This phenomenon is exploited by those who have the creative ability to create new things that had never existed before. For example Mark Zuckerberg who

created Facebook which is widely used by people to interact, then appears LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Wiser, Google+, Instagram, WhatsApp, all of which its use can be found on social media [1].

The next development of the phenomenon of pseudonyms began to be found on social media be it Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Wiser, Google+, including WhatsApp. Users of pseudonyms on social media have various motives or reasons. Sometimes accounts found on social media that use the name samara comment negatively on those aimed at artists, politicians, ethnic groups, religions, government institutions, the private sector, including companies. This is the main problem in this study, so this research aims to understand and examine deeper the reasons for using pseudonyms on Social Media, then responds to what the pseudonym users do on Social Media. [2].

### METHOD

This research applied qualitative approach. The instruments used were interview and observation. The author analysed the data using an interactive model from Miles and Huberman, while the data validity test uses source triangulation.

### RESULT & DISCUSSION

The use of social media in daily life can no longer be dammed, almost every individual must have an account on their respective social media such as from Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Wiser, Google+, and WhatsApp. The presence of social media at this time makes the public free in expressing something, even free to use the account name may match the actual name, or use a pseudonym. However, pseudonym users must be careful because they are considered harmful to others, then the person concerned can be guided according to applicable rules. Because of that, pseudonym users must have a responsibility in social media.

As explained in the Research Methods section, the source of this research data is students in Malang, who have accounts on social media and use pseudonyms on their accounts. After conducting research, obtained data sources as shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Subject Identity

No	Name	Age	Religion	Profession	Origin	Social Media Used
01	Firda Irawan	22	Islam	Student of UMM	Banjarmasin	Instagram
02	Vanni Tara Kartika	20	Islam	Student of UMM	Balikpapan	Instagram
03	Nadia Balqis	20	Islam	Student of UMM	Malang	Twitter
04	Alief Fahrizi Wibi Firmanda	22	Islam	Student of UMM	Malang	Instagram & Twitter
05	Dellin Nugraha	21	Islam	Student of UMM	Lombok Tengah	Instagram & Twitter
06	Jodi Indrawan	20	Islam	Student of UM	Kalimantan Selatan	Instagram & Twitter
07	Awandayuri Wenny. K	21	Islam	Student of UB	Blitar	Twitter
08	Siti Aisyah	20	Islam	Student of UMM	Kalimantan Timur	Instagram & Twitter
09	Alia Rizka Mansyur	21	Islam	Student of UMM	Sampang Madura	Instagram
10	Izza Qothrun Nada.	20	Islam	Student of UB	Balikpapan	Instagram & Twitter
11	Fajar Ramadhan Qurrota Ayun	21	Islam	Student of UMM	Malang	Instagram, Line, Twitter, Whatsapp
12	Mahaparana Al Latif	21	Islam	Student of UM	Probolinggo	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp
13	Arif Arifin Wali	26	Islam	Student of ITN Malang	Belu NTT	Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, Line

The reasons using a pseudonym on social media according to subject (01) is because, in addition to many friends who use social media, many features can be used to support their existence and find information. Using @ferre.devran as his cryptic name on the Instagram account, so it looks unique and gives an image of himself that is different and provides another experience. As a form of responsibility, the subject is still paying attention to norms, order, and politeness to comment on a matter in social media. Subjects agree that the person who uses a pseudonym is a liar, but for him, he uses a pseudonym for pleasure only.

Subject (02) has a backup account on Instagram, with the motive of only wanting to shut down and he wants to express himself freely without any restrictions, with the reason of wanting to find out someone's life on a social media account without having to be known by that person, the subject usually expressing himself through photos and videos about something he finds interesting. Subjects claimed that they had no intention of doing things that harmed others so that their reserve accounts were used properly and wisely according to the rules in the ITE Law regarding the use of social media.

Subject (03) uses twitter to express themselves using a pseudonym. The reason is that he feels

comfortable and has more freedom of expression without fear of offending someone they know. During using a pseudonym, the subject claimed there was never any intention to deceive people or commit crimes against others. Therefore, subjects felt that there was no problem using pseudonyms on social media.

Subject (04) explained that the pseudonym used was aimed at self-expression as well as to monitor other people without having to know the person being monitored, and even used as the stage name the worst in the portfolio of his work as a videographer, so that he could support his work. Even subjects in using pseudonyms also know that what is done is actually lying to others, but because it is not for the purpose of crime, the subjects dare to be responsible for accounts with pseudonyms they have.

Subject (05) uses pseudonyms on Instagram and Twitter, because social media is very updated and has the most users. The subject uses the Backup player username on both of his social media. The word is used as a username because the subject is a basketball player at UMM and is often a reserve player. According to him, the subject has never done anything outside the rules, such as committing a crime, spreading hoaxes or expressing hatred. The subject tried not to do things that were not

commendable because he knew the penalty for the owner of a pseudonym on social media if it harms people.

Subject (06) acknowledged that up to now still uses a pseudonym on social media. He uses the name of the 2nd account on Instagram and Twitter. Based on what he revealed, Jodi is a person who sees the use of a pseudonym is unique as part of entertainment and as his personal identity on social media. Jodi is quite uncomfortable when meeting an account with a pseudonym which is only a provocateur. His openness evidences his responsibility on social media to anyone who wants to get acquainted and work together.

Subject (07) explained that he chose Twitter as an account that was used for various purposes and deliberately used a pseudonym because he could freely argue without fearing that people would find out who he was. The subject sometimes thinks that if he uses a pseudonym, he can avoid being targeted or targeted by criminals who use social media. Therefore, according to him, it needs responsibility for every account holder who uses a pseudonym, so that when commenting on social media, it does not harm others.

From the results of interviews with subjects (08), it can be seen that, the motive underlying the subject to use a pseudonym on social media is only to seek satisfaction and pleasure for himself. Besides, his pseudonym is considered to attract attention so that it can make other people more curious again towards his identity. The subject has absolutely no intention to lie and deceive others. Even the subjects are very careful in giving comments because the subjects know on social media a lot of people who deliberately use pseudonyms for negative things. That is a form of responsibility when using pseudonyms on social media.

Instagram users who are subjects (09) reveal that motives or reasons for using pseudonyms so that they are not detected while monitoring or stalking someone else's profile, and making themselves more open, and just for fun. According to him, there are indeed unfavourable actions taken by pseudonym users, but not all pseudonym users do such a thing. It really depends on his personality and how wise the user is in social media. Because of this, matters relating to comments and other irresponsible actions have never been done.

The subject (10) holds that the use of a pseudonym is not necessarily a bad indication, because basically, every individual has different goals or intentions in using the pseudonym. The owner of the polling account name who chose the pseudonym was not because of a negative intent or purpose, but only because he wanted to shorten his real name, in addition to providing freedom, pleasure, and comfort. In terms of ownership of a

pseudonym account, he chose to privatize the account so that it would only be known by his closest friends or relatives. This is also influenced by his shy personality and introvert when using social media using real names. Thus, he can form an identity by appearing confident in posting photos and videos.

Furthermore, subject (11) explained that using pseudonyms aside from being entertainment, following trends, maintaining privacy, comfort, safety and being easily known. Subjects realize that there are cyber crimes in social media, for that the subjects are consistent not to comment on things that are not well known. According to him even though cyberspace, but users must remain responsible, respect each other, and not interfere with the comfort of others. The subject was also aware that having a pseudonym could be prosecuted in the realm of law if the pseudonym was misused primarily to deceive others.

Subject (12) has social media accounts such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, and Instagram. But he only uses a pseudonym on his Instagram which is named with a popular username as Ayamkecaplahitam which means sweet black and slightly spicy. This meaning shows its character. The subject said that the people around him knew that the owner of the pseudonym chicken was a subject himself because he put the real name under the pseudonym. The main motivation is for pleasure, security, and comfort. As a form of responsibility using a pseudonym, he always prioritizes guarding the attitudes and feelings when playing social media so as not to offend others. Because maintaining attitudes and feelings can be avoided by the name of terror.

The subject (13) is the last subject to explain that he has social media accounts such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram. But he only uses a pseudonym on Instagram, namely with the username the\_badutz. The subject said several people around him knew that the owner of the\_badutz pseudonym was his own subject because he included his real name under the pseudonym. With a motivation to entertain anyone with work even though the subject can entertain everyone from behind the scenes. The subject never thought to carry out negative actions in any form. Therefore the subject remains steadfast even though he uses a pseudonym on social media, he will remain cautious, think long, and maintain an attitude when playing on social media.

From the overall data presented by the subjects in line with what was stated by Wollam in Rulli Nasrullah, who said that the presence of technology is considered to be one of the mediums that are able to meet individual needs for communication and can encourage each individual more freely to express who they are. For Wollam, it is a perfect



depiction of how technology can encourage and provide space for each individual to construct themselves. When using Instagram social media, users build networks, make friends, then express their feelings virtually in the communication process that occurs. Interactions that occur on social media will lead to self-definition and offer self-invention, given that social media has features that can facilitate its users in constructing themselves in the virtual world. Every individual has unlimited abilities in expressing himself; the results of the creation will represent the individual in determining their role and interacting on social media. In social media, users are free to choose to open their identity honestly or choose to create a new identity. [10]-[12].

As stated by Rulli Nasrullah, that each individual is free in expressing himself by using a pseudonym, but he also does not forget to keep his words in a comment. Given a lot of pseudonym users who commit acts of crime, violate and harm others even involved in cyberbullying or fraud. Nearly all subjects know that a person who uses a pseudonym can be charged with paying a fine and can be put in jail if he misuses an account that uses a pseudonym. Therefore the subject is aware of the importance of keeping speech so as not to hurt the feelings of others. Subjects understand that usually, users who have a disguised account have a sense of responsibility that tends to be small and do not think deeply in commenting, due to the ignorance of others about the disguise account. Subjects understand that people who use samara names have the opportunity to commit crimes because data or identities relating to personal matters can be manipulated. Even though the subjects use a pseudonym account, they still use their real identity related to matters relating to personal data [10]-[12].

And if all the explanations of the subjects interviewed were attempted to be analyzed with Dramaturgi Ervin Goffman's theory, then it can be explained that in the beginning most people who use social media must create an account or register an account in order to have a User ID as a medium for communicating with a wide audience. It is undeniable, they initially used accounts with their personal names that are used on personal accounts. The phenomenon of using pseudonyms is no longer a common phenomenon for social media users. Because the use of pseudonyms is often used not only in cyberspace but also used in various aspects of social life, this phenomenon can be likened to Erving Goffman's narrative of the dramaturgy theory which states that human life is likened to a theatre stage--the front area (front stage) and the back area (backstage). A front stage is a place where the formal role plays in accordance with the demands of the audience. Instead, backstage refers

to a place that allows the cast to prepare before showing the action to the audience. If dramaturgy is juxtaposed with the phenomenon of using a pseudonym, continuity will be seen where the pseudonym is used to hide the real identity. Through a pseudonym account, the subject said it is freer to use social media in accordance with the original side of himself or part of the 'backstage'. What happens to the subject is simply to have fun, to be more free to channel their opinions in cyberspace, and make it easier to find something, to channel all their desires, to be free in expressing themselves or not afraid to get harsh criticism, including to protect yourself from those who are against yourself [13].

### CONCLUSION

Based on the previous description, it can be concluded that the reasons for using pseudonyms on social media are quite diverse such as maintaining privacy, comfort, freedom, avoiding crime, facilitating username, wanting to instal a person, for existence, expressing themselves, as an enjoyment, more being yourself, creating a new image, covering up real identity, and more freely uploading status as he wishes. And as a form of responsibility using a pseudonym, it is necessary always to maintain the attitudes and feelings of others when using social media so as not to offend others. The principle that must be understood by users of pseudonyms is that everyone has the authority and authority in using his social media. However, everyone also should respect other users and maintain conduciveness and order in the media.

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